The BELIEF of WITCHCRAFT VINDICATED:

PROVING,

From SCRIPTURE, there have been Witches; and from REASON, that there may be Such ſtill.

IN

ANSWER

To a late Pamphlet, Intituled,

The Impoſſibility of Witchcraft: Plainly proving, from Scripture and Reaſon, That there never was a WITCH, &c.

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The Belief of WITCHCRAFT VINDICATED, &c.

THE late Tryal and Condemnation of *Jane Wenham* for a Witch, at *Hertford* Aſſizes, having occaſion'd many and various Speculations upon the Subject of *Witchcraft*, and many that I have convers'd with concluding, that there neither is, nor can be any ſuch Thing, I was naturally led into a deeper Search of the Subject, than I had either Leiſure or Inclination to allow my ſelf before, and to conſider whether ſuch an Opinion, ſo contrary to that of our Forefathers, and our Laws, ſo contrary to innumerable Hiſtorical Matters of Fact, ſo contrary to plain Scripture, as we find it in our Tranſlation, be founded upon any Reaſon that can ſupport ſo great a Weight, as to over-bear all theſe ſeveral Arguments produceable on the contrary Side of the Queſtion. Accordingly I drew up ſuch Conſiderations as preſently occurr'd, and concluded, as I thought, that I had good Reaſon to believe that Witchcraft was not only poſſible, but was very credible; but was reſolv'd not to be ſo prepoſſeſs'd, by my own Obſervations, as not to be always ready to embrace the contrary Opinion, when ever Arguments

ſhould be offer'd, that I could judge ſtrong enough to incline me to ſuch a Change of my Thoughts: When, therefore, ſuch a pompous and aſſuming Title appear'd in the Advertiſements of a Book, as *plainly proving from Scripture and Reaſon, that there never was a* Witch, *and that it is both Irrational and Impious to believe there ever was*; together with a *Confutation of the Depoſitions againſt* Jane Wenham, I was reſolv d to conſider it with all the Coolneſs and Indifference imaginable, ſo as to come over to the Author's Side, if I found Reaſon ſo to do: Accordingly I perus'd the ſame, but was ſo far from being convinc'd of my having before entertain'd falſe Notions of the Matter, that I thought my ſelf capable of Confuting his Aſſertions, however otherwiſe but a Smatterer in Matters of Learning. If the Author, who has the Character, and, for ought I know, juſtly, of an ingenious Man, has exerted his utmoſt in that Point, I think the Controverſy may ſoon be brought to an Iſſue and terminated, and the World fix'd in their Judgment of the Matter; but if he has not, it were to be wiſh'd he had, that he might have rais'd up an Antagoniſt more worthy of himſelf and the Cauſe, and not have given an Opportunity for Men to look upon our Performances on each Side, as Velitations only to entertain and amuſe them till ſome abler Combatants enter the Liſts.

My Reaſons for the Poſſibility and Credibility of Witchcraft I ſhall have Occaſion to inſert in my ſeveral Anſwers to the Author, and therefore, not to cloy my Reader with Repetitions, I wave them at preſent, and fall imme-

immediately to the Conſideration of the Book before me.

Our Author, who intimates himſelf to be the ſame that writes the *Proteſtant Poſt Boy*, undertakes, in his Preface, to anſwer two Arguments obſerv'd by ſome, as it ſhould ſeem, of his Correſpondents in Behalf of Witchcraft: The Firſt is, That *It is a very odd Thing that our Laws impower Judges to put People to Death for* Witchcraft, *if there is no ſuch Thing as a* Witch *in the World.* Now, I conceive, the direct Anſwer to this had been to have ſhewn, that this is not Matter of Fact; or being ſo, that the Laws in this Caſe were miſunderſtood and miſapply'd, but this was too notorious to aſſert. What then doth he ſay to the Matter? Why, truly, he owns there are ſuch Laws; and propoſes to give us ſome Account of them: And ſuch a one it is, that is ſo far from leſſening their Reaſonableneſs, the Thing I ſuppoſe he aims at, that I think it farther eſtabliſhes it: It is this in ſhort; There being a Law made, about 400 Years ago, in other Countries, that Hereticks ſhould be burnt, the Inquiſitors, who were conſtituted the Judges of *Hereſies*, condemn'd Witches under the Notion of Hereticks, and this in Order, at once, to eſtabliſh the Uſurp'd Dominion of the *Pope*, and enrich themſelves. *Hence very probably other Nations, and particularly* ngland, *did afterwards make Laws o the ſame Tendency, and puniſh'd Witches in like Manner ever ſince, till the Statute* De Heretico comburendo *was repealed.* When this Statute was repeal'd, it ſeems another was made againſt Witches, not conſider'd as Hereticks, as before, but as Murderers,

Murderers, 33 *H.* 8. This Statute, it ſeems, was repeal'd in the two following Reigns; but *what Motives the ſucceeding Reigns had to make more ſevere Laws againſt them, may be worth Enquiry.* That is, if you can find a Reaſon you may, but he cannot: What then hath our Author been doing, or how hath he in the leaſt ſatisfy'd the Objection? Indeed he hath confirm'd it: For if the Matter of Fact be true, that the Laws againſt Witches, which he ſuppoſes made upon the Account of the Religion then prevailing, which was *Popery*, what can we imagine could be the Reaſon of reviving them in *Proteſtant* Reigns, after they had been ſo long repeal'd, but a plain Conviction of the notorious Miſchiefs of Witches, and the Neceſſity of Providing againſt them by Sanguinary Laws. So that, in ſhort, what our Author hath brought to ſolve the Objection, is, Firſt, a plain Owning the Thing in which the Force of the Objection lay, *to wit*, the Exiſtence of thoſe Laws. *Secondly*, P. 4. Pretence of giving an Account of them, by ſaying they ought to be accounted for. And, *Thirdly*, by Proceeding ſo far in the Account, as to make it ſtill very reaſonable to conclude there were very good Reaſons for their being enacted. This is the firſt Step our Author hath taken in this Diſpute, and I ſhall leave it to my Reader to judge if it be not an unlucky one; but he will be more ſurpriz'd, I ſuppoſe, when he finds the ſame unaccountable Vein of Arguing to run thro' his whole Performance. This Argument for Witchcraft is drawn from the Laws in Force againſt Witches. The next he propoſes to anſwer, is taken from another

conſequent

conſequent Matter of Fact, that Judges have accordingly condemn'd Witches by the Force of ſuch Laws. It runs thus, *The Records of Juſtice are full of Inſtances, in all Ages, of the Truth of Witchcraft, which, in their Opinion, amounts to a Demonſtration.* Our Author's firſt Reaſon why theſe Records do not amount to a Demonſtration, is becauſe, if, according to *Glanvil*, *We are ignorant of the Extents and Bounds of Nature's Sphere and Poſſibilities, we are uncertain whether thoſe Facts were really done by Witchcraft, or produc'd by the Courſe of Nature.* I ſuppoſe, by amounting to a Demonſtration in the Objection, we are to underſtand a very great Degree of Probability. This Anſwer then, I ſay, is of no Weight to invalidate the Credibility of theſe Facts, becauſe they might be done by the Courſe of Nature and Witchcraft too, becauſe the Devil may act in Confederacy with a Witch by the meer Force of Nature; and this I ſay upon the Strength of our Author's Principle, becauſe *we do not know the Extent of Nature.* The Nature of Spirits, and their Power of acting upon Bodies we know not: But it would be wondrous ſtrange if a poor, ignorant, decripped Woman ſhould have penetrated farther into the Nature of Things, than thoſe who have, with the moſt unweary'd Application, ſearch'd into the Nature and Powers of Matter: Such therefore, when they effect Prodigies above the known Reach of the Learned and Inquiſitive, I think it is Demonſtration that they do theſe ſurprizing Actions by the Help of others; and ſince they tell us they do them by the Devil's Help, it is highly credible they do ſo.

2. Anſ. *Judges for Intereſt ſake, have ſuffer'd themſelves to be impos'd upon by Falſe Witneſſes, and*

ſo

ſo condemned Innocent Perſons for things they were never Guilty of; and can the Records of thoſe Condemnations amount to a Demonſtration? I Reply, No. But is there any Inſtance upon Record, that Judges have received Bribes in the Tryals of Witches, and have thereby been impos'd upon by Falſe Witneſſe, to the Condemnation of ſuch? If not, what is this Anſwer to the purpoſe?

3. Anſ. *Judges have Condemn'd Innocent Perſons, for Facts that were Impoſſible to be done.* But doth it hence follow, Thut Perſons that have been Condemn'd for Facts poſſible to be done, were Condemn'd unjuſtly? For that the ſtrange appearances in Witchcraft are poſſible, I muſt believe, becauſe I find the Devil, who is the chief Agent, allow'd to do as ſtrange Things in Scripture: For inſtance, I cannot but imagine it as poſſible for the Devil to enable *Ann Thorn* to leap over a Five-Bar Gate, as it was to ſet our Saviour on a Pinacle of the Temple: In ſhort, I find no appearances in Witchcraft more ſtrange, than what is Recorded of the *Demoniack*, *Mark*, 5. 45. Of whom it is ſaid, *That he had been often bound with Fetters and Chains, and the Chains had been plucked aſunder by him, and the Fetters broken in pieces: Neither could any Man tame him. And always, Night and Day, he was in the Mountains, and in the Tombs, crying and cutting himſelf with Stones.* Perhaps the Poſition would be difficult to be made out, *That an Innocent Man was ever Condemn'd of a Fact Impoſſible in its own Nature*, and to ſpeak of any other Impoſſible Fact could ſurely make but little to the Purpoſe.

4. Anſ. *Judges have Condemn'd many Innocent Perſons upon the Teſtimony of pretended Witchfinders*

finders, who being Authoriz'd, &c. I Anſwer, I queſtion the Truth of the Hiſtory, that any were ever Condemned purely upon the Teſtimony of Witch-finders, without any other Inducements for the ſame. But ſuppoſing the Account True; muſt One or more Inſtances of, perhaps, Unwarantable Proceedings, make us conclude, that a Thouſand other Inſtances, unattended with ſuch indefenſible Circumſtances, may not be worthy of the higheſt Credit? Doth a particular Exception prove, that a Rule is not generally True?

5. Anſ. *The Judges themſelves are not Infallible, and may, perhaps, have Erroneous Notions of theſe Dark and Abſtruce Matters, and Condemn Witches wrongfully.* It is poſſible; but doth it follow, therefore, that they are Miſtaken? They are not Infallible it is true; but for all that, ſince there are ſo many Inſtances of the Condemnation of Witches; ſo many Accounts of Diabolical Facts, atteſted by the Oaths of unexceptionable Witneſſes, I muſt needs think that it is ſo highly probable there have been Witches, and conſequently are ſo, becauſe it is all the Demonſtration the Nature of the Thing is capable of: And therefore, paſſing by his Inſtances of the *Antipodes*, as much againſt him, as for him; as only ſhewing, that People may poſſibly be generally Miſtaken; (nor can I ſubſcribe to his Opinion, when he ſays, *It is more Obvious and Intelligible than thoſe Impoſſible Inſtances of Witchcraft, for which* 2000 *poor Souls have been Condemned*; for it was neither Obvious, nor Intelligible, till Experience confirm'd the Truth of it; nor are the Inſtances of Witchcraft Impoſſible, but Confirm'd nearer Home by

equal Occular Demonſtration) paſſing by this therefore, I proceed to his Confutation of the Depoſitions againſt *Jane Wenham*. This indeed he promis'd in the Title Page, but hath thought fit to drop it. He tells us, *He ſhould enter into the Merits of the ſeveral Depoſitions, which are Sixteen in number, but out of reſpect to the Sacred Habit which Two of them wear, and the Incapacities of the other Fourteen, he diſmiſſes them to their reſpective Bed-Chambers, with no farther Remarks, than that the Inconſiſtencies which they are guilty of, ſhew they very much ſtand in need of Reſt, ſince a Crazy Body very often indiſpoſes the Soul, and influences the Mind to entertain ſtrange and preternatural Ideas of Things that have no manner of Exiſtence.* His Conſideration of the Clergy, I own is very commendable; but I think the clearing of Truth ought to be above all others: Beſides, he might have managed the Matter ſo, as to have ſhewn their Miſtakes, without breaking in upon the Reſpect due to the Order. But what could all his Enquiries have done more to the Expoſing theſe Gentlemen, than what he inſinuates of the Contradictions in the *Depoſitions*, and their being under a Diſorder of Brain, that made them. But is it ſo? Why doth he not produce one Inſtance of [illegible]nſiſtency? It is ſtrange, if this be True, that [illegible]e Court ſhould Condemn the Woman upon [illegible] Evidence of Mad-Men, that was Inconſiſte[illegible]oo. Beſides, is it not moſt admirable, that ſo many Crazed, Melancholy, Mad-People, ſhould combine ſo unanimouſly in the Deſtruction of an Old Woman, and be ſo uniform in ſuch a variety of Evidence, as to obtain her Condemnation? This ſufficiently clears them of the Imputation

of

of Madneſs; and as for their Honeſty, ſince I find it not attaced, I have no occaſion to ſuppoſe it queſtionable.

So much for the Preface. Come we now to the Book itſelf; which conſiſting partly of *Harangues*, partly of *Arguments*, and the former being of no Conſideration, but as they are ſupported by *theſe*, I ſhall ſet my ſelf profeſſedly to conſider *theſe* only, as being only material to the Point. His firſt Thing that looks like Argument, is, an Anſwer to an Objection that may be rais'd from the preſent Tranſlation of the Bible, which he tells us is Falſe, in relation to Witches, and the like; What he ſays on this Head, I ſhall Conſider, when we come to the Article, *Whether there be any ſuch Thing as a Witch in Scripture.* He propoſes then, page 6, to manage the Subject in this manner. 1. To prove, *That this ſtrange Notion of Witchcraft has its Foundation in Heathen Fables.* 2. *That it was Improv'd by Papal Inquiſitors, for the ſake of Private Intereſt.* 3. To prove, *That there is no ſuch Thing as a Witch in Scripture.* 4. To make appear, *That there is no ſuch Thing as a Witch at all; and produce ſeveral Arguments againſt the Affirmers of Witchcraft.* 5. *To Anſwer other Arguments to the Contrary.* And 6. *and Laſtly, To ſhew by what Means this Opinion of Witchcraft came into the World.*

Our Author's firſt Particular is *to prove, That this ſtrange Notion of Witchcraft has its Foundation in Heathen Fables.* That Witchcraft was practiſed firſt among the Heathens, I ſhall readily grant, becauſe the Scripture aſſured us of the ſame; this being one of the Cauſes which God himſelf gives for his Driving out the Inhabi-

tants of *Canaan* before the Children of *Iſrael*, *Deut.* 18. 9, 10, 11, 12. But our Author deduces this Opinion from the *Grecian* and *Roman* Fables; and it were ſufficient to anſwer this Aſſertion, by ſaying at preſent, what I ſhall hereafter, I believe, make out, that this Belief of ours hath its Foundation in Scripture, and that we do not believe the Heathens becauſe the Heathens did. However, that the Author may not think himſelf neglected, I ſhall ſay ſomething particularly to this Head. He tells us this Belief aroſe from the vain Credulity of Men in the Heathen Ages, but hath not one Word to ſhew that this was meer Credulity, and not an Opinion grounded on Matter of Fact. He divides his Heathen Impoſtors into two Claſſes, thoſe that were called *Sagæ*, for being famous for Propheſying Things to come; and *Veneficæ*, or *Lamiæ*, who did wonderful Exploits. Now, that the *Sagæ* did not foretell ſtrange Things above the Sagacity of Man to foreſee, he hath not a Word to prove; however, to our Purpoſe, I urge, that there were Women inſpir'd by the Devil, Witneſs the Prieſteſſes of *Delphos*, whoſe Oracles were ſo famous, and in Requeſt ſo long Time in the moſt learned and judicious Parts of the Heathen World, the Truth of many of whoſe Predictions if any doubt, yet, I think, none ought to queſtion that they were inſpir'd, and acted by evil Spirits, or *Dæmons*; if any do, I refer them to be ſatisfy'd by a Book, entituled, *An Eſſay on Inſpirations, publiſh'd* within theſe few *Years*. And it were to be wiſh'd the Judicious and Sagacious Author would be prevail'd upon to give us his Thoughts on this Subject, and thereby put an entire End to the Diſpute. His

His next Sort of Heathen Witches were the *Lamiæ*, or *Veneficæ*; theſe, he ſays, among other Things, were notorious for Killing of Children by Herbs, which were ſuppos'd to have ſtrange Kind of Virtues in them. Now I would aſk whether they did *really* kill Children, and play other mad Pranks; if they did, and in ſuch an unaccountable Manner, as therefore to be eſteem'd Witches, as our Author ſays nothing to the contrary, then, as theſe Herbs could have no ſuch Virtues in themſelves, they muſt do it by no leſs powerful Aſſiſtants than *Dæmons*, tho', perhaps, not believ'd to do ſo by the reſt of the World. It doth not, therefore, appear that our Notions of Witchcraft were deliver'd down to us from Heathen Fables; but granting they were, may it not fairly be anſwer'd, That the Chriſtians took up their Opinions, not becauſe the Heathens talk'd ſo fantaſtically, but becauſe Matter of Fact perſwaded them into the Belief, that there was ſomething at the Bottom of thoſe Fables, and which they ſhould have believ'd, had there been no ſuch Fables at all? And, after all, who doth not know that many Truths, as well Natural as Hiſtorical, were couch'd under the Mythology of the Heathens: So that this firſt Particular I think by no means made out. As for the *Jucubi* and *Succubi*, tho' it make much to our Purpoſe, if there were ſuch, but nothing againſt us, if there were not, yet ſhall I not trouble my ſelf about them any farther, than to tranſcribe Mr. *Milton*'s Account of the Matter.

With theſe came they, who from the bord'ring Flood
Of Old Euphrates *to the Brook that parts*
Egypt

Egypt *from* Syrian *Ground, had general Names*
Of Baalim *and* Aſhtaroth, *thoſe Male*
Thoſe Feminine. For Spirits, when they pleaſe,
Can either Sea aſſume, or both; ſo loſt
And uncompounded is their Eſſence pure,
Not ty'd or manacled with Joint or Limb,
Nor founded on the brittle Strength of Bones,
Like cumbrous Fleſh; but in what Shape they chuſe,
Dilated or condens'd, bright or obſcure,
Can execute their airy Purpoſes,
And Works of Love *and* Enmity *fulfil.*
Parad. Loſt. B. 1.

Our Author's next Buſineſs is to ſhew, That this Notion of Witchcraft, as taken from the Heathens, has been improv'd by *Papal Inquiſitors*, for the ſake of private Intereſt: And here he enlarges upon what he had before ſaid in the Preface, which being anſwer'd already, little more needs to be ſaid now. He tells us, the *Monks* and *Fryars* being entruſted, by the *Popes*, with the Power of Trying Hereticks, twiſted and blended Witchcraft with the Crime of Hereſy, and in Tormenting and putting People upon that Pretence to Death, they at once gratify'd the Ambition and uſurp'd Power of their Lord the *Pope*, and their own inſatiable Covetouſneſs and Thirſt after other Men's Goods. Now, as the Laws in *England* can have no ſuch Deſigns as gratifying the *Pope* or his *Inquiſitors*, this can ſignify nothing to us of *England*. I obſerve farther, that it is ſtrange theſe avaritious *Inquiſitors* ſhould puniſh Witches for the ſake of E riching themſelves, when he himſelf aſſures us, the modern Witches, in Oppoſition to thoſe of Scripture, are poor, ſilly, contemptible People, and draws an

an Argument againſt Witchcraft, from the miſerable Poverty of our vulgarly reputed Witches: And then, as for the Eſtabliſhing the *Pope*'s Authority, how would it be ſerviceable to this End, except they really thought theſe were Witches; and if they did really eſteem them ſuch upon Tryal, this I muſt think no Argument againſt, but a good one for our Side of the Queſtion: So that our Author's Account for the Belief of Witches in Chriſtian Countries is not very credible; and, if true, proves nothing to the Purpoſe: For, ſuppoſing the Reaſons Scandalous which induc'd them to puniſh Witches, can it thence be any Ways inferr'd, that there are really none ſuch? The Hereticks were burnt in the ſame manner, and upon the ſame Account: But could it ever enter into the Head of any Man to draw an Inference from hence, that there never were any ſuch People really, as Hereticks in the *Popiſh* Senſe of the Word? And, after all, it will be a fuller Anſwer ſtill, tho' I think there needs none to the foremention'd Particulars, if the Chriſtian Belief of Witches appears to be fairly deduc'd from Scripture; which I promiſe my ſelf I ſhall be able to do in my Anſwer to the Author's three Particulars, which was to prove, *That there is no ſuch Thing as a Witch in Scripture.*

His *Firſt Argument is taken from the difference between our Vulgarly reputed* Witches, *and thoſe which our Tranſlators of the Bible call ſo. Theſe were Kings, and Queens, and Princes of the Earth, as alſo the Prieſts and Philoſophers, and Wiſe Men of this World. Whereas the Witches, now-a-days, are poor, ſilly, contemptible People*, &c. Of his Kings and

and Queens, I find *Manaſſes* and *Jezebel* to have been mention'd as ſuch: Of the former it is ſaid, *That He uſed Enchantments, and dealt with familiar Spirits, and Wizards*, but that he was one himſelf, is not ſo very clear; and of *Jezebel*, I find, that *Jehu* objected her Witchcraft to her Son *Joram*; but here, perhaps, the Word is to be underſtood Figuratively, to ſignify her enticing People to Idolatry: By the others, I ſuppoſe, our Author means the Magicians of *Egypt*, in the times of *Joſeph* and *Moſes*, and thoſe of *Babylon*, mention'd by *Daniel*; now, granting the Obſervation true, I cannot ſee any force in the Argument. For may not the Great and Learned Men of the World have had Commerce with the Devil formerly, in Times of Idolatry and Ignorance, and yet the Devil be able to Seduce none but poor ignorant People now under the Goſpel Light? Again, how is our Author ſure that none but the poor and contemptible People have, if any, any Commerce with the Devil now? Muſt all ſuch preſently be diſcover'd? Thoſe that are ſo, are diſcover'd by means of Venting their Paſſions in ſo violent and publick a Manner upon thoſe, by whom they have been diſoblig'd; whereas, People of Faſhion, and in better Circumſtances, may entertain ſuch a Commerce upon other Motives beſides Revenge, and who may be wiſe enough to do it, without making ſuch a Uſe of it, as to diſcover their Practices, and lay themſelves open to the Law. Again, there may be *Witches*, or *Wizards*, in other Countries that may be eſteem'd the Wiſe-Men of their Nations, where Idolatry prevails, however not with us; Hiſtory alſo tells us of ſeveral

Popes

Popes themſelves, who were both Princes and Prieſts, who were actually Magicians or Sorcerers. Beſides, are none but Princes and Wiſe Men mention'd as Witches in Scripture? What muſt we think of ſhe of *Endor*? What of all thoſe that *Saul* put out of the Land? Theſe we may believe were no more Prieſts and Philoſophers, than the other a Queen. So that the firſt Argument againſt Scripture Witches is, I think, fully anſwer'd: Come we then to his

Second Argument, which is drawn from *the* Sadduces; *a famous Sect among the* Jews, *who deny'd Spirits, and the Reſurrection of the Dead yet had the Five Books of* Moſes *in high Eſteem and Regard; wherefore, either they did not underſtand* Hebrew, *or if they did, the Notion of Witchcraft did not appear in* Moſes. By the ſame Argument I prove there is no Angels. The *Sadduces* deny'd the being of Angels; now, either the *Sadduces* did not underſtand *Hebrew*, or the Notion of Angels did not appear in *Moſes*. What ſhall we ſay then, that there is no Account of Angels in *Moſes*? Or ſhall we not ſay, that the *Sadduces* were a wilfull, obſtinate People, wedded to their own Prejudices, in ſpite of Reaſon and Religion, that did not, or *would* not underſtand *Moſes*; however, they pretended to the World, that they had a great Veneration for him. Our Author muſt ſurely be much in Want of Proofs, or had a very mean Opinion of his Readers, who could produce this for Reaſon, or think it would paſs upon them for ſuch.

His Third and Laſt Argument is taken from *the different Practices aſcrib'd unto our vul-*

garly ſuppos'd Witches, and unto thoſe in our Tranſlation of the Bible. Our modern Witches practice a ſecret Occult Art, and it requires great Skill to diſcover them by ſeveral ſtrange Signs, and horrid Tortures. But thoſe whom our Tranſlators call Witches, were ſuch as practis'd what they did, openly, and in the Face of the World, making publick Profeſſion of their Art, which was the Counterfeit Art of Propheſying and Working of Miracles. To this I anſwer, That it is very improbable, nay incredible, what our Author here urges ſhould be true, becauſe, whatever it was, it was puniſhable by Death, and therefore, to be ſure not practis'd in ſo open a manner as he here ſuggeſts; can it be imagin'd, that any one would make a publick Profeſſion, in the Face of the World, of an Art for which he knew he muſt forfeit his Life? Believe it who can. But this he, our Author, thinks confirm'd by *Saul*'s putting the Witches out of the Land ſo eaſily, whereas a Proclamation would hardly be able to do the ſame by ours. The former Anſwer will ſerve us here again, that ſince the Crime was puniſhable with Death, they would certainly make the Buſineſs of Diſcovery as difficult as poſſible. And as for our own Witches, if the Diſcovery be ſo difficult, how comes it to paſs that ſo many have ſuffer'd upon this Account, after full Conviction? That the Witches among the *Jews* were ſuffer'd to kill People, I do not affirm; the Queſtion is, and that which entitles them to be call'd in *Engliſh*, WITCHES, whether they had a Commerce with the Devil, and acted by Virtue of that Confederacy? Nor is the Diſcovery of thoſe among us, who Practiſe upon others by Diſeaſes, ſo very difficult,

cult, ſince they ſeem not to be empower'd to torment any but Children, if them, without diſcovering themſelves. What Means *Saul* had of Diſcovering the Witches in his Time, I know not; but were a Proclamation publiſh'd, That all that ſhould give an Account of ſuſpected Witches, ſhould, upon Conviction of ſuch, be rewarded with a conſiderable Sum, I believe our Author would find the Diſcovery of Witches among us an eaſier Taſk than he imagines. When *Saul* cut off the Witches in his Days, it is plain there were ſtill Means for ſome to remain undiſcover'd, Witneſs her of *Endor*, and how many more might do ſo, we know not. So that, for this Reaſon, it appears not to have been ſo eaſy a Matter to diſcover Scripture Witches as our Author fancies: So that I muſt needs think this Argument of his a very frivolous one; and thus have I anſwer'd his three Arguments againſt the being of Witches in Scripture, weaker than which, were ſurely, never produc'd in any Cauſe of Moment, and yet upon this Point the main Weight of the Diſpute depends, and which therefore requir'd the ſtrongeſt Attack; his Buſineſs was to prove there was no Witch in Scripture; which, I think, he has by no means done; I ſhall prove the Affirmative, that there is; and that I ſhall do by conſidering what he ſays of thoſe Words, which he finds Fault with in the preſent Tranſlation, and which, for Method's ſake, I referr'd to be ſpoke to in this Place.

He tells us, what our Tranſlation renders *Enchanter*, ought to be *Conjecturer*; and a *Witch*, a *Miracle Monger*, or *Impoſtor*; ſuch, for Inſtance, as Queen *Jezabel*, and King *Manaſſes*,

whom our Author fancies to have been *Juglers*: Such were the *Magicians*, that withſtood *Moſes* and *Aaron*. The Word *Ob*, which, in my Dictionary, is render'd a Devil, or Evil Spirit, he ſays, *Signifies ſometimes the Gift of Oracling, and ſometimes the Perſon that hath ſuch a Gift; it ſignifies, alſo, a Bottle or Hollow Veſſel, and from this Signification he ſuppoſes the other came*; by which we come to underſtand that the *Oracle of the Bottle* was not the Invention of a Modern Wit. We are let, it ſeems, into theſe Truths by the Tranſlation of *Junicus* and *Tremellius* and the old Tranſlator; but, by our Author's leave, I ſhall take the Liberty of ſuppoſing, that our Tranſlators underſtood *Hebrew* as well as *Junius* and *Tremellius*, and, conſequently, for all his learned Performance, perſiſt to think, our Countrymen have, with equal Judgment and Faithfulneſs, render'd the Text accurately in reference to *Witches*, *Inchanters*, and *Familiar Spirits*. Here, indeed, is a fair occaſion offered of Diſplaying my profound ſkill in the Oriental Languages; but I wave it, becauſe I think I can ſufficiently prove the Sence of Scripture from Scripture it ſelf. Our Buſineſs at preſent, as I apprehend, is to ſhew, that there is in Scripture mention made of ſuch, who have had an actual Commerce with the Devil, in order, by his Aſſiſtance, to perform ſtrange and ſurprizing Things, whether they are called *Conjurers*, *Enchanters*, *Sorcerers*, *Witches*, or whatever Titles elſe they are diſtinguiſhed by; and if there appear really to be any ſuch, Our Tranſlation, I ſuppoſe, is ſufficiently vindicated, as well as the Belief of Witchcraft from Scripture. And the Firſt

Inſtance

Inſtance I ſhall conſider, is the Caſe of the Magicians of *Ægypt*, that oppoſed *Moſes* and *Aaron*. The Hiſtorical matter of Fact, as we find it recorded, *Exod.* 7. 10, 11, 12, is this, *And* Moſes *and* Aaron *went in unto* Pharoah, *and they did ſo as the Lord Commanded*; *and* Aaron *caſt down his Rod before* Pharoah, *and before his Servants, and it became a Serpent. Then* Pharoah *alſo called the Wiſe Men, and the Sorcerers, now the Magicians of* Egypt, *they alſo did in like manner with their Inchantments. For they caſt down every Man his Rod, and they became Serpents: But* Aaron's *Rod ſwallowed up their Rods.* Theſe Magicians our Author calls *Miracle Mongers: Nor let any one think*, ſaith he, *that, for the Performance of theſe Counterfeit Miracles, they ſtood in need of the Devil's Aſſiſtance; for what they perform'd, either exceeded not the Compaſs of Human Art, altho' Miraculous in the Eyes of the Vulgar; or if it did, then it was not really perform'd, but a mere* Jugling *Impoſture. Such kind of* Juglers were *thoſe who ſtood before* Pharoah, *in Oppoſition to* Moſes *and* Aaron.

What I ſhall firſt obſerve here, is this Author's new Method of Arguing; if theſe Miracles which they perform'd, exceeded the compaſs of Human Art, then they were not really perform'd; ſo that I find it may ſo happen that a thing that is perform'd, may not *really* be perform'd; this it is to be Sagacious. But to our Author's meaning, which I ſuppoſe is, that they did not really perform what they ſeem'd to perform; their turning of Rods into Serpents was a mere Deluſion: But I ſay the Scripture informs us otherwiſe, which affirms, the Magicians did what *Aaron* did, they caſt down

down their Rods, and thoſe Rods became Serpents, that is, they ſeem'd to be Serpents; according to this Gentleman's Gloſs, he may, if he pleaſes take this Liberty of Interpreting Scripture; but I cannot think any reaſonable Reader will give into his Opinion; I am ſure if they do, they muſt own, that the Metamorphoſis of *Aaron*'s Rod was equally Deluſion; and I think ſuch People had better give up the Scriptures at once, as one intire Impoſition, than thus to Banter them away by Piece-Meal. But to Magicians; what they perform'd it ſeems was a Deluſion; if ſo, I ſuppoſe this Deluſion muſt be perform'd by having Serpents ready at Hand, which ſhould appear at the Caſting down of their Rods, which Rods ſhould be inviſibly convey'd away by Slight of Hand, or elſe they caſt ſuch a miſt before the Spectators Eyes, as to make them think the Rods were Serpents, when they were not. Now this laſt could not be the Caſe of the Magicians, becauſe it is ſaid, that *Aaron*'s Rod ſwallow'd up theirs; which could not be, if their Rods now become Serpents, were really nothing but an Imaginary appearance: And for the Rods of the Magicians being convey'd away and Serpents put in their places, this is equally contradictory to the Hiſtory, which ſays, that *Aaron*'s Rod ſwallow'd up their Rods, which would be falſe, if their Rods were gone and Serpents left in their Places. We muſt then, if we believe *Moſes*, believe that the Magicians Rods were really turn'd into Serpents. What ſhall we ſay then, that this Miracle was perform'd by the Power of the Devil? I ſhall not aſſert it, becauſe I muſt needs think, that God never

never Impowered the Devil to perform a real Miracle; that is, what is above or contrary to the ſtated Courſe of Nature, as this certainly was. There nothing then remains, but that it was done by the Power of God. The Solution of this matter hath given much trouble to Divines, and our Author hath juſtly expos'd that of St. *Auguſtines:* To me the Difficulty ſeems inextricable, except we allow, that the Magicians attempting this, through the Confidence they had in thoſe Dæmons, they had an intercourſe with, it pleas'd God to let their Expectations of performing what *Aaron* did; he anſwered in this, and the two following Miracles, to this end, that when the Power, they thought theſe Miracles perform'd by, was found to be able to aſſiſt them no longer, they might own, as they really did, that the God, in whoſe name *Moſes* and *Aaron* came, was Superior to him or them, with whom they had intercourſe; for that it was not a meer Deluſion but actually done, the two following Miracles evince. For when *Aaron* ſtroke the Waters of *Ægypt*, and they turn'd into Blood, it is ſaid, that the *Magicians of* Egypt *did* ſo *with their Inchantments*. And where ſhould they have procur'd Blood enough to have perform'd this by Jugling? Or who ſhould inform them, before hand, that this would be the next Miracle perform'd? None, ſurely, but the Devil, and to own this, were to give up the Cauſe directly. Now, that the Magicians had an intercourſe with Dæmons, of whom they had not thoſe Accounts we have, we may fairly inter, becauſe it is wholly unaccountable to Imagine, that they could think themſelves capable of performing ſuch ſtrange Actions by the Power

of

of Art: Could it ever come into any Man's Head to think he could do, what all the Powers of Nature will never be able to do, and this at a Minutes Warning, to wit, of turning a ſtick into a living Organical Creature? But it is very Natural to ſuppoſe they might hope to do this by the Help of the Devil, whom they eſteem a God, for they knowing no difference between the True God and Devils, might very well ſuppoſe, that what they ſaw *Aaron* do, in the Name, and by the Aſſiſtance of his God, they might do by the Aſſiſtance of theirs, whom they had no occaſion, as yet, to Imagine leſs Powerful than the other, with leſs Confidence than this they could never ſurely have attempted to have rival'd the Miracles of *Aaron*, before ſuch a Company as the King and all his Court; when, if they had fail'd, it had prov'd no leſs the Confuſion of the King than themſelves. For theſe Reaſons I muſt conclude the Magicians had a Commerce with the Devil, tho' I do not allow their Miracles to be perform'd by his Power.

The Next Inſtance of Diabolical Commerce in Scripture I ſhall mention, is the Hiſtory of the Witch of *Endor*, as related 1. *Sam.* 28. Here we are inform'd, that *Samuel* was Dead, and the Philiſtines invaded the Land, and *Saul* ſeeing their Armies was afraid, and his Heart greatly trembled; and what added to his Confuſion was, that ſeeking Counſel of God, he was Anſwered neither by Dreams, nor by Urim, nor by Prophets. *Saul* who before had put out all thoſe that had Familiar Spirits, and the Wizards out of the Land was in ſuch a Conſternation, that now he enquires after one himſelf

himſelf, and takes up the Reſolution of the Goddeſs in the Poet.

Flectere ſi nequeo Superos, Acheronta movebo.

If God will not receive me, I'll try the Devil.

Accordingly, having Information of one that had a Familiar Spirit at *Endor*, he applies himſelf to her in diſguiſe. Our Author's Account of thoſe, that had Familiar Spirits, is, that they were *Juglers*, pretending to Oracles, delivered from a Bottle, or through a hallow Veſſel. Now, in anſwer to this, it muſt be preſum'd, that *Saul* underſtood the Common Senſe of the Jews in reference to thoſe that had Familiar Spirits, and that by his Expectations is plainly enough diſcovered: What he deſir'd of this Witch of *Endor* was; *that ſhe would divine by the Familiar Spirit, and bring him up whom He ſhould name unto Her.* Is it poſſible to Imagine that *Saul* believ'd this Woman a Jugler, or a Counterfeit deliverer of Oracles, and not one that could, by the Help of her *Familiar Spirit*, bring up the Ghoſt of whom ſhe pleas'd, the Devil at leaſt in his Appearance. Hence we may fairly infer, that the Senſe of the *Jews* was, that one that had a *Familiar Spirit*, had actually a Commerce with a Devil or Evil Spirit; And the Proceſs of the Story confirms this farther. *Saul* having Swore to her, not to betray her, ſhe falls to work, and as he requeſted endeavours to raiſe up *Samuel* or rather his likeneſs: As yet ſhe knows not *Saul*, but no ſooner doth the Spirit approach but ſhe is under ſtrange apprehenſions, ſhe cries out with a loud voice, ſhe finds it is *Saul* himſelf that Conſults her. But how comes ſhe to know him now, and not before? By the Help of her

Confederate Jugler? If ſuch a Perſon there was that knew him, how comes he to diſcover him no ſooner? This ſeems therefore the information of an Infernal Familiar. For how could *Samuel*'s approach give her ſuch a Light? Might not any other employ'd by *Saul* call for *Samuel*, as well as himſelf; or why then did ſhe not diſcover him at the firſt mention of *Samuel*'s Name? It is plain ſhe was diſappointed. She expected, very probably, her Familiar or ſome other Dæmon in *Samuel*'s ſhape, and finds I conceive, it is *Samuel* himſelf that riſes, as the reſt of the Story plainly, I think, ſhews. Now, if all this was only Jugling and Counterfeit, if 'twas only a Confederate of the Witch that aſſum'd the Shape of *Samuel*, how comes he ſo exactly to foretell his Death the Next Day? A Counterfeit would have been rather apt to have ſooth'd the King, and given him a pleaſing Anſwer; nay, it is ſaid, that *Saul* perceived that it was *Samuel*; and his after Behaviour manifeſts, that the Prophet's Words, had left a ſtrong impreſſion behind them: So, that upon the whole, I muſt conclude, that it was the Senſe of the *Jewiſh* Nation, that by thoſe that had *Familiar Spirits* were to be underſtood ſuch as had an Actual Commerce with the Devil; and the Hiſtory of this Woman confirms that Notion to be true; as the ſame might be made appear very probable from the Story of *Balaam*; but this I ſuppoſe Sufficient. And now I think we have reaſon enough to be believe, that we underſtand the Meaning of Witches in Scripture, and that they were ſuch, as our Native Language means by the Word.

Our Author comes now to his 4. Particular, which

which is *to prove there is no ſuch Thing as a Witch at all.* He tells us, he hath Vanity enough to think, he hath prov'd there is no ſuch thing as a Witch in Scripture, (and I muſt confeſs I think it is vanity to do ſo) and his Deduction is, That if there is ſuch a Thing, it ought to have been mention'd there; and this is his 1. Argument againſt Witchcraft in General. To which I Anſwer, I have alſo the vanity to think, I have Prov'd there is ſuch a Thing as a Witch mention'd in Scripture, and Conſequently I have thereby Anſwered this Argument. However, ſuppoſing this not done, and that there was no ſuch thing mentioned in the Sacred Writings, yet his Reaſonings on this Point will receive an eaſy Anſwer. His main buſineſs, in this place, is to Anſwer an Objection, That Silence in Scripture is no Argument againſt the Truth of a Thing, becauſe many Things are true, that are not mention'd there. What he ſays to this, is, That a Matter of ſo great Moment, as the Diſcovery of a Witch ought not to have been paſs'd over in Silence, when there is ſo great Care taken to diſcover thoſe that offend in leſs heinous Matters: As for Inſtance, Adultery. As for what he ſays of the Severity of the Laws againſt Inceſtuous Concubinage, meddling with ſtrange Women, Uncleanneſs, and Oppreſſion, I ſay, if the Appearances of Witchcraft have any thing more Sinful, they are, however, forbid in Witchcraft and Sorcery, and the Puniſhment as much for a Witch as any other Crime: But I forget, we are at preſent ſuppoſing no Witch to be mention'd in Scripture; but ſtill variety of Anſwers may be given to this Objection if it had really a true

Foundation. First, These Laws have relation only to the *Jews*, so that, upon the Supposition, there were no *Witches* among the *Jews*, as they were God's peculiar People, and not expos'd to so strong Temptations of the Devil; then it can be no wonder there was no Law made against such Criminals, which should never be found among them: But here an Objection offers itself: If there were Witches among them, how come the Tryal of them to be omitted? To which I answer, there could be no Occasion of it, since those Facts that discover'd them to be such, must of it self be sufficient Evidence, and the Law was plain: Upon such Conviction they should be Stoned to Death. I esteem Murder a greater Crime than Adultery, and yet there was no miraculous Tryal appointed for this. *Naboth* was Condemn'd for Blaspheming God and the King, by the Force of False Witnesses; but no means left to clear his Innocence, by means of a Supernatural Tryal. False Witnesses, no doubt, against a Man's Life, was as great a Matter as Adultery, and yet I do not remember of any extraordinary Method prescrib'd, for the Detecting such, by wondrous Means; and therefore, for these and some other Reasons, I must needs think, that tho' Adultery was made discoverable by a strange (I shall not say with our Author *Horrible*) Tryal, yet it doth not follow, that nothing of equal or greater Moment is true, because not thus miraculously discoverable: And therefore Witchcraft, if it were not, as it certainly is mentioned in Scripture, might yet be true. The

2. Arg. *That there is no such Thing as a Witch at all, is drawn from the Poverty of the common reputed*

reputed Witches. To this I anſwer, This is not Univerſally true; ſome Inſtances there are of Witches that have been unaccountably ſupply'd with abundance of Neceſſaries, who had no viſible means of procuring them: And as for thoſe that are not, we may anſwer, The Devil cannot go beyond his Commiſſion; he may be permitted to be Inſtrumental in the Revenge of his Malicious Confederates, and yet not be permitted to relieve them in the Neceſſaries of Life. His

3. Argument againſt Witches, *That it is either Irrational, or Impious*; Irrational, *to think that the Devils are Creatures full of Malice, and breathing nothing but Miſchief againſt the whole Race of Man, and that they ſuffer a Man to Live, when they can ſo eaſily kill us at the Command of a Witch.* This he anſwers himſelf: *But, if you evade this, by ſaying, That Devils cannot hurt us without the Divine Permiſſion; then,* I ſay, *'tis Impious to concern the great God with Witchcraft.* But, as he knew the Anſwer to this was obvious, he ſuggeſts it himſelf. *'Tis true indeed, he may ſend Death and Diſeaſes amongſt the Sons of Men, to puniſh them for their Sins at his own Pleaſure. But,* then the Difference, it ſeems, is, *that he ſhould do ſo at the Deſire of the Devil, at the Command of a Witch, is ſuch a Gratification of Malice, as is far from God to perform:* So that the Argument is come to this, That it is Impious to ſay, the Devil can hurt us by Divine Permiſſion: I anſwer, it is no more ſo, than it is to ſay, a Murderer can kill us by Divine Permiſſion; and the Argument is as ſtrong to prove the Nonentity of, and as full againſt Murder as Witchcraft; the Devil is an Inſtigator in the one Caſe, and the direct Inſtrument in the other; and it

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3. Argument againſt Witches, *That it is either Irrational, or Impious*; Irrational, *to think that the Devils are Creatures full of Malice, and breathing nothing but Miſchief againſt the whole Race of Man, and that they ſuffer a Man to Live, when they can ſo eaſily kill us at the Command of a Witch.* This he anſwers himſelf: *But, if you evade this, by ſaying, That Devils cannot hurt us without the Divine Permiſſion; then,* I ſay, *'tis Impious to concern the great God with Witchcraft.* But, as he knew the Anſwer to this was obvious, he ſuggeſts it himſelf. *'Tis true indeed, he may ſend Death and Diſeaſes amongſt the Sons of Men, to puniſh them for their Sins at his own Pleaſure. But,* then the Difference, it ſeems, is, *that he ſhould do ſo at the Deſire of the Devil, at the Command of a Witch, is ſuch a Gratification of Malice, as is far from God to perform:* So that the Argument is come to this, That it is Impious to ſay, the Devil can hurt us by Divine Permiſſion: I anſwer, it is no more ſo, than it is to ſay, a Murderer can kill us by Divine Permiſſion; and the Argument is as ſtrong to prove the Nonentity of, and as full againſt Murder as Witchcraft; the Devil is an Inſtigator in the one Caſe, and the direct Inſtrument in the other; and it

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is equally impious to aſſert, There ever was a Murderer, as a Witch: And when our Author, or any other, ſhall demonſtrate, by this, or any other Argument, that there never was a Murderer, I promiſe readily to own there never was a Witch. As for the Gratification of the Devils or Witches, God gives not the Permiſſion with any ſuch View: He uſes their Malice, as he doth all other Wickedneſs, to very wiſe Purpoſes of his own. For, I pray, doth God permit one Man to Murder another, in Complaiſance to the Perſon, and to gratify him in his revengeful Humour? But the Author not minding ſuch parallel Caſes, which muſt, at firſt View, have ſhew'd the Weakneſs of ſuch Reaſoning, foreſaw an Objection that would be equally deſtructive of his Poſition, *to wit*, the Inſtance of *Satan* and *Job*; and by Way of Anſwer informs us, That *Calvin, in his Sermons on the two firſt Chapters of* Job, *takes a great deal of Pains to explode this Opinion of God's Permiſſion.* So that the Irrationality and Impiety of Witchcraft is at laſt found to have no other Support but Mr. *Calvin*'s Expoſition of *Job*; and conſequently, to his darling Doctrine of Abſolute Predeſtination, his denying the Actions of Men, or Devils by God's Permiſſion. But doth our Author believe *Calvin*, or not? If he doth, then he gives into the Opinion, that God is the Author of Sin, which he muſt be, if Men do ſinful Actions not by his Permiſſion, but abſolute determinate Decree: And then the Argument will run thus; *'Tis Impious to concern the Great God with Witchcraft.* Why ſo? Becauſe it is to make God gratify the Devil: Well, but he gratify'd the Devil in the

Caſe

Caſe of *Job*. No, he gratify'd himſelf; for what the Devil did, was but God's abſolute Appointment: So that the Reaſons why the Affirming of Witchcraft is impious, is becauſe God never permits any Thing, but acts every Thing directly and poſitively himſelf. But, may there not be Witchcraft for all that? Yes, certainly, and therefore this is having Recourſe to an Abſurdity for Shelter, which, if granted, yields none. Beſides, this, if granted, ſolves all the ſtrange Appearances and Difficulties of Witchcraft at once, this Opinion makes God the Actor, and conſequently, ſets an Author before our Eyes capable of Exhibiting much ſtranger Things ſtill. If this Gentleman does not believe *Calvin*, (as I cannot ſuppoſe he will be willing to be thought capable of Falling in with the innumerable Abſurdities of *Abſolute Predeſtination*) why then the Matter is worſe ſtill; he anſwers an Inſtance in Scripture that directly overthrows the Poſition advanc'd by him, by ſuch Allegations which he himſelf doth not believe; ſo that let him, or the Reader, chuſe which they will, it no ways appears that the Belief of *Witchcraft* is either *Irrational* or *Impious*. Now, whether we ſurvey the Devil as a neceſſary Inſtrument, or voluntary Agent, acting at Liberty within his Sphere, for it is all one, as to the Matter of Witchcraft: We ſhall conſider whether the wonderful Occurrences in *Witchcraft* do not appear poſſible, from as wonderful Occurrences perform'd by his Intervention in Scripture; and here, in the Caſe of *Job*, we find that he was enabled to deſpoil this good Man of his Oxen and Aſſes, by the means of the

the *Sabeans*, who took them away, and ſlew his Servants with the Edge of the Sword: By his Inſtignation the *Chaldeans* carried away his Camels, and ſlew the Servants that attended them: By his means the Fire of God, or, as it is in the Margin, a great Fire fell from Heaven, and burn'd up his Sheep, and the Servants that kept them: By his means a great Wind from the Wilderneſs ſmote the four Corners of the Houſe, and threw it down upon his ſeven Sons and three Daughters that were there Feaſting, and deſtroy'd them all: And, laſtly, he ſmote *Job* himſelf with ſore Boyls from the Sole of his Foot unto his Crown. In the *New Teſtament* we find a large Account of thoſe that were poſſeſs'd of Evil Spirits, many of them were at once in the Man quoted before, whom they render'd unconfinable by any Chains, untameable by Men, and how they made him miſuſe and torture his own Body, I need not again repeat: But theſe being caſt out of him by our Saviour, begg'd to be permitted to enter the Herd of Swine, in Number about 2000, and having obtain'd the deſir'd Leave, they hurry'd them into the Sea, where they were all drowned. Things ſurely as ſtrange and unaccountable are theſe as any in our modern *Witchcraft*; and therefore, if any will ſtill perſiſt, that it is either *Irrational* or *Impious* to believe *Witches* upon theſe Accounts, they muſt ſay, if they will be true to their own Aſſertions, that it is equally ſo, to believe Scripture. But our Author hath another Argument ſtill in Reſerve.

Laſtly, (ſays he) *The Vanity and Falſeneſs of their Opinion, who believe there are Witches, appears*

pears from nothing more than from this, that it aſcribes to the Devil an Omnipotent Pow er; *inſomuch, that no Rational Man, by the Light of Reaſon, ſhall be able to tell, from the Hiſtory of the Goſpel, whether our Saviour himſelf were a Witch or no.* To this I anſwer, That we who believe Witchcraft, do by no means aſcribe to the Devil an Omnipotent Power, or believe any ſuch Thing reſiding in him, no more than any that read the Scriptures and believe them, think that the Actions perform'd by the Devil, and there recorded, do in the leaſt countenance any ſuch Almightineſs. As for our Saviour's being a Witch, his own Anſwer to the *Phariſees* confutes it; it is well known, and therefore I need not tranſcribe it, only it is plain that the *Phariſees*, who underſtood *Moſes* as well as the *Sadduces*, did think that Witchcraft was true, that is, that Men might perform very ſtrange Things by the Aſſiſtance of the Devil; and it is obſervable, that our Saviour commanded his Diſciples to obſerve what theſe *Phariſees* ſaid, tho' not to imitate their Actions. However, our Saviour doth not think fit to argue againſt this Opinion of theirs, but, granting it true, (and how far this may be urg'd for an Argument on our Side of the Queſtion, I leave the Reader to conſider) he proves he could not be ſuch a one, becauſe it was plain he oppos'd the Devil, whom he eſteem'd Politican enough not to deſtroy his own Kingdom. *But what were his Miracles*, ſaith our Author, *or how were they valued, if malicious Creatures without a Divine Commiſſion enabling them thereto, can make Frogs and Serpents, raiſe the Dead, give Laws to the Winds and Seas, to mention no more*

of thoſe prodigious works aſcrib'd unto the Devil upon the Account of VVitchcraft. I own that the Devil can do none of theſe mighty Things without a Divine Commiſſion; nay, I think I may own, that he never was impower'd to perform any ſuch; that he never made Frogs or Serpents; rais'd the Dead; or any Works that are truly miraculous; if any ſuch came to paſs by the Miniſtration of his Agents, it was beſide his Purpoſe and Expectation; thus have I already accounted for the Miracles of the *Magicians*, which were no more the Effect of his Power, than the Propheſies of *Balaam*, or the *Sybils* ſince, of his Inſpiration. So that our Saviour's Miracles can never be pretended, with any Shew of Reaſon, to be rival'd by the Effects of Witchcraft. And as for the Devil's giving Laws to the Winds and Seas, that neither is his Province: However, when commiſſion'd, no doubt he may perform ſome ſtrange Things by them; for underſtanding the Force of Nature beyond any Mortal, he may perform Actions very *wonderful* and *ſurprizing* to us, which are not therefore preſently to be deem'd preternatural, ſince *we* are far from *knowing* the utmoſt Extent of Nature's Bounds, as I obſerv'd before upon this adopted Principle of our Author. But *who* are they, I pray, *whom* he *accuſes* of Believing, that the Devil *can command the Influence of the Sun, govern the Motion of the Stars, transform Men and Women into Cats?* &c. If any believe this, I am not of their Mind: But tho' he cannot do this, the laſt I mean, yet he may influence or poſſeſs Cats, Frogs, Serpents, *&c.* as he once poſſeſs'd a Serpent to deceive *Eve*; as he poſſeſs'd the

Bodies

Bodies of Swine, and drove them into the Sea; as he poſſeſs'd the *Bodies* of Men, and govern'd their Organs ſo, as to render them Dumb; to make others to ſpeak what he liſted: This Scripture gives us an Account of, and why it ſhould be Omnipotence to do it, I cannot ſee.

Hence our Author proceeds to Hiſtory and Harangue; and in Purſuance of this Diabolical Omnipotency, introduces the Decree of the Council of *Ancyra*, which, becauſe he ſeems to think it to be to the Purpoſe, I ſhall conſider. He tells us, one *Manes* reviv'd the Opinion of two Principles, firſt embrac'd by Heathens, *to wit*, of two Gods, of which, one was Good, and the Author of all Good; and the other, Evil, and the Author of all Evil; now as the one was Omnipotent to Good, ſo the other was to Evil. Now our Author ſeems to imagine, that the Evil Principle and our Devil are the ſame; whereas had he conſider'd, he might have obſerv'd, that thoſe that believe the Evil Principle as a God, have quite another Notion of him, than we, from Scripture have of the Devil; ſo that what he is upon can be nothing even to his own Purpoſe. But to go on: Afterwards, it ſeems one *Priſcillian* embrac'd the Opinion of *Manes*; and the Council of *Ancyra*, eſteeming, perhaps, their Evil Principle, our very Devil, and a real Exiſting Being, made the following Decree againſt the Opinion, which, as Tranſlated by our Author, runs thus, *If any one believes, that the Devil can Form, or make any Creatures, or that the Infernal Spirit, by the means of his own Power, can create Thunder and Lightning, and Rain, and Drowth, as* Priſcillian *has affirm'd, let him be Excommunica-*

ted and Accurſed. To the Truth aſſerted here, That the Devil cannot do ſuch Things, I willingly ſubſcribe; but perceive not how it affects *Witchcraft.* Our Author goes on, *Wherefore, if the Devil cannot raiſe Tempeſts by his own Sufficiency, he did no more in the Caſe of* Job, *than,* Elijah, *or any mortal Man may do, when he receives a Commiſſion from God.*

Our Author hath chang'd the Terms, the Decree mentions creating Tempeſts, and he of raiſing them: What he means by *his own ſufficiency* deſerves alſo an Explication: It is poſſible, God may have given the Devil a Power of raiſing Tempeſts by his Formation, or as he made him a Spirit, and yet not have impower'd Man, who is of a different Make, to do the ſame; ſo that when Man doth ſo, it muſt be by Commiſſion from God, whereas Permiſſion may be ſufficient to the Devil to do the ſame; ſo that, contrary to the Author's Inference, it appears, *The Doctrine of* Witchcraft *doth not magnify the Diabolical Power beyond the due Proportion, nor ſavour of* Priſcillian, Manes, *or the Heathen World, any farther than they embraced a very probable Truth.* Thus, I think, I have prov'd, very plainly, That it is neither *Irrational,* nor *Impious,* to believe Witchcraft. Our Author proceeds, Fifthly, to anſwer the Arguments of thoſe, that defend Witchcraft: And the firſt of theſe, he propoſes to anſwer, is, what no one could well advance in the behalf of Witchcraft; and which I agree with him doth not prove it, to wit, The Truth of thoſe Accounts we have of ſtrange Things perform'd by inviſible Agents, or Spirits; many of which he doth not Contradict, but ſeems to allow there may be ſuch; and therefore, all I ſhall obſerve here is, that he is the firſt, that I am aware of, to have known, that, allowing the Stories of Apparitions, or Spirits *playing mad Tricks among us,* hath not acquieſced in the Opinion of the reallity of Witchcraft.

The next, and firſt real Argument, he propoſes to Anſwer, is, *That the Perſons tormented by Devils, have fallen into their Fits at the Sight, or upon the Touch of ſuſpected Witches, and that they have ſeen the ſuſpected* Witches *in this or that place of the Room, when no ſtander-by elſe could ſee any Thing at all,* &c. Why, *Theſe Accounts are founded,* ſaith he, *partly in the Jugling Deluſions of Confederated Impoſtors, partly in the Errors, or Ridiculous Miſtakes of Vulgar Rumours.* So

that

that ſuch a vaſt Number of reputed Witches have been put to Death, by means of Impoſtors accuſing People falſely, and becauſe fooliſh Perſons have talk'd *Idely* of theſe Matters: A very credible Account! But how doth he prove it? Why he begs your pardon for that; if you won't believe him, you may enjoy your own Opinion. Well, but being in a better Humour than ordinary, he will allow ſome of theſe Accounts to be really True: And then in this Caſe, he is pleas'd to let us know, he *ſees no Reaſon whereby to conclude there are ſuch Beings as Witches, but rather, that theſe Spirits, who are ſo Frolick and Gameſome in doing Miſchief, when they perceive Perſons ſuſpected to have ſet them at work, may on purpoſe ſo manage their malicious Tricks, as to confirm the Suſpicion, promote the Accuſation, procure the Condemnation of thoſe Miſerable Wretches*, &c. This is his Account of ſome of the Phœnomenons of Witchcraft. But in Anſwer to this, I ſay, It is very improbable, that God would permit the Devil ſo to deceive Mankind, and impoſe upon the Publick, to the Condemning of Innocent Perſons to Death, by the force of his falſe Accuſations, whereby Mankind could have no defence againſt him, and conſequently this would be more Unaccountable than any thing in Witchcraft can be pretended to be: Human Laws may reſtrain People from a Commerce with him, or theſe not prevailing, the offending Perſons may yet be brought to condign Puniſhment: But what Laws, what Puniſhments, could reach theſe Malignant Frolickſome Spirits? And what would be ſtranger ſtill, theſe Spirits would be able to perſwade the ſuſpected Perſons themſelves, that, tho' they knew themſelves wholly Innocent they were really concern'd in bewitching the Diſtemper'd Perſon, that they employ'd theſe Dæmons, that they had a long Commerce and Confederacy with them; this I ſay would be more unaccountable than all the Appearances that have attended Witchcraft. However, I am glad the Author hath allow'd thus much, and own'd the Poſſibility of the Devils tormenting Perſons in this manner, for thereby he hath moſt evidently overthrown what he before advanc'd, of the Irrationality and Impiety of believing Witchcraft ſo that all muſt paſs for *non ſcriptum*, as if there was no ſuch thing ſaid, and that part of his Title ought to be eras'd which promiſes ſuch a Proof.

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The Argument, he next anſwers, is, Peoples falling ill, upon the Threatning or Curſing of the Perſon afterwards Suſpected. The Subſtance of what he ſays to this, is, that it is no certain Proof. I grant it is not of its ſelf; but joyn'd with other Circumſtances is very conſiderable. To ſee a Man come out of a Houſe with his Sword and Hands all Bloody, is no Proof of a Murder committed, but if it ſhould be afterwards found, that a Man was juſt then kill'd in the Houſe and his deaths Wound found to be made with a Sword, and if it were farther known, that this Perſon had born a Grudge againſt the Deceas'd, I ſuppoſe no one would queſtion, but this Man was the Murderer. This way of Arguing is therefore more Fallacy, and the Force of it conſiſts in this; this Part is not the whole, therefore all the Parts united are not the whole, as if we ſhould Argue, that the Body is not the whole Man, therefore the Body and Soul is not the whole Man.

The next and laſt Argument he propoſes to Anſwer, is, the Confeſſion of Witches themſelves. To this he People by Tortures have been brought to confeſs any ſays, thing, their Tormenters have deſired; and that this is the Caſe of *Witches*. To which I anſwer, ſome have indeed been urg'd by exquiſite Tortures to Confeſs Crimes, they have not been Guilty of, as thinking it more preferable to ſuffer the Puniſhment of a Crime they never committed, than by the Continuance of Life at the Expence of undergoing inſufferable Pain: but is this, or was it ever the Caſe of *Witches* among us? If any know ſuch, I freely leave them to lay as little ſtreſs upon the Confeſſion of ſuch People, as they pleaſe. But what will our Author ſay to the Confeſſions of ſuch, who being under the Sentence of Death, which the acknowledgment of their Crimes could neither be ſuppos'd to retard or haſten? And of ſuch there are many Inſtances to be met with. Now, tho' we may Suſpect the Truth of a Malefactor, who aſſerts his Innocence to the Laſt Moment; yet ſurely never any queſtion'd the Truth of a Criminal's Confeſſion, who own'd his Crimes and the Juſtice of his Condemnation in this Seaſon. Our Author ſeems to have been a ware of the Weakneſs of this Anſwer, and therefore endeavours to Corroborate it, with a quite different account, to wit, *That he is not to doubt but ſome Poor Silly, Melancholy, old Wretches have really believ'd themſelves Witches, and to be Guilty*

of

of thoſe Actions, which not only their Fooliſh Neighbours, but Men that are called Worſhipful have charged them with. He tells us, *The Effects of Melancholy are very ſtrange, eſpecially if heightned by Poverty or want of good Diet, by Ignorance, Solitarineſs, and old Age: Such People take their very Dreams to be real Viſions and Truths. Want of knowledge in the Art of Phyſick makes Men attribute meer Natural Diſtempers to Spirits; nay, Phyſicians themſelves are in the Dark as to the abſtruſer Diſtempers of Human Bodies, eſpecially ſuch as ariſe from Melancholly.* To which I anſwer, that theſe Witches generally are no ſuch Melancholy Perſons, as our Author would repreſent them; they appear lively and bold; preſuming upon their Power of doing Miſchief; they threaten upon all Occaſions, and keep the Neighbourhood in fear of them, where they are; and give People reaſon to ſuſpect them very early, from the Intemperance of their Paſſion: So that our Author's fine diſcourſe on Melancholly, is nothing at all to the Purpoſe. Beſides, it is very ſtrange to me that two Melancholy Perſons ſhould ſo happily jump together in their Fancies, without any intercourſe with one another, as that the one ſhould poſitively, even out of the Fits, Confirm, that ſhe owes her Pains to ſuch a Witch; and the Perſon ſo accus'd, ſhould own ſhe did thus procure her Opinion, by means of a Familiar taking her ſhape, to be thus Tormented, and yet all this to be meer Imagination. This indeed would be ſomething more wonderful, than even *Witchcraft* it ſelf ever furniſh'd forth. As for the Phyſicians Ignorance in diſeaſes ariſing from Melancholy, ſurely that Art hath not been cultivated ſo long, by as Sagacious Wits, as ever the World Produc'd, for them to be Ignorant whether a Diſtemper be Natural, or the Effect of Diabolical Power. Diſtempers wholly unaccountable, Appearances which plainly diſcover an Inviſible Agent, are eaſily diſtinguiſhable ſure from thoſe effects, which the Nature of Human Bodies is capable of Producing. And ſuch Inſtances have been ſo Numerous, and ſo Inconteſtably evidenc'd as muſt convince any, who have not reſolv'd to ſhut their Eyes againſt the Brighteſt Light, and harden their Hearts againſt the moſt evident Reaſon.

Our

Our Author goes on, Sixthly, to ſhew by what means this Opinion of Witchcraft came into the World; but what he ſays on this head, being all precarious, founded on unprov'd Suppoſitions; and I having ſhew'd, that our Opinion is founded on the unerring Truth of Scripture, and the Continuance of it being ſupported by Innumerable matters of Facts among Chriſtians, this I ſhall ſuppoſe a Sufficient Anſwer to what he ſays on this Head, and I ſuppoſing I have made good the Title of my Book, I here, with him, diſmiſs my Reader.

FINIS.